(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government has approved the setting up of a Price Stabilization Fund for the benefit of tobacco farmers.

(d) and (e) In order to provide remunerative pricse to Flue Cured Virginia tobacco growers the Tobacco Board regulates production keeping in view the demand. Besides, it interacts with traders and domestic and international cigarette maunfacturers to encourage them to enhance their purchases and thereby impart buoyancy to prices.

Visit of Swedish business delegation

3882. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Swedish business delegation was recently in India on tour;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held on bilateral trade; and

(c) to what extent the trade between the two countries is likely to expand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENIVIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Indo-Swedish Joint Commission for Economic Industrial Technical and Scientific Cooperation held its 14th Meeting on the 1st and 2nd April, 2003 in New Delhi. The Official delegation led by Trade and Industry Minister of Sweden was accompanied by business delegation also. During the Joint Commission Meeting both sides made a presentation on the economic situation of their respective countries. Economic Developments and Policy in India and Sweden as well as multilateral issues with particular reference to WTO matters were discussed. The Indian side apprised the Swedish side of the various measures taken in the recent past to liberalize, streamline and modify policies and procedures in the areas of trade, investment, technology transfer and other sectors of economy and urged Swedish industry and business organizations to take full advantage of the favourable investment and commercial climate in India, the Swedish side, welcomed these developments and informed that India remained one of Sweden's most important trading partners amcng developing countries and that Sweden was very keen to increase commercial, industrial and technical cooperation

with India. Both sides while expressing satisfaction at the growth in bilateral trade between the two countries desired that collaborated efforts may be made by both sides to assist the Indian exporters to have access to a more significant share of Swedish market. To reduce the growing trade gap, the Indian side requested to step up Sweden's imports from India and suggested the products that could be considered namely plantation and marine products, leather goods, gems and jewellery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electronics and computer software, textiles and handicrafts. In response, the Swedish side suggested that Swedish Import Council could assist and advise the Indian companies in their endevour for exports to Sweden.

An interactive session was also held between Swedish Businessmen and Senior Officers of various Ministries/Departments of Government of India to discuss the issues relating to WTO, Revenue, Taxation and other matters.

All these efforts will go a long way in expanding bilateral trade and investment relations between the two countries.

Improvement in labour law

†3883.SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an immediate need to improve the labour laws to make our foreign-trade competitive in the international market successful!;

(b) if so, the reaction of Govement thereto;

(c) whether Government have formulated any plan for amending the labour laws; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

† Original Notice of the question \vas received in Hindi.